

SENATE RESOLUTION 99
By Williams

A RESOLUTION to express concern for the rate of teen suicides in this state and nation and to commend the Jason Foundation, Inc. for its efforts to combat this scourge.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it exceedingly alarming that teen suicides have increased 300 percent since 1970 for ages 15 through 19 and has increased 120 percent since 1980 for ages 10 through 14, with the result that suicide is the second leading cause of death among our teenage children; and

WHEREAS, teen suicides know no racial, economic or social barriers, and every one hour and 45 minutes someone's child ends his or her life by suicide; and

WHEREAS, four to eight percent of adolescents report a suicide attempt within the prior 12 months, and up to 60 percent of high school students report having thought of suicide; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, more teenagers and young adults died from suicide than died from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza and chronic lung disease combined; and

WHEREAS, many experts feel that reported figures are very low in reality, and that many actual suicides are reported as accidents, because of the absence of a note stating the victim's intentions; and

WHEREAS, the causes of teen suicides are numerous, including problems at home or at school with peers, or within a relationship with a boyfriend or girlfriend; sometimes one or a

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combination of these factors are so overwhelming to a teen that all doors to solutions to end their despair seem closed; and

WHEREAS, out of the pain and heartache of the loss of his young son, Jason, to suicide, Mr. A. Clark Flatt resolved to organize people and corporations to devise methods to combat the circumstances which drive young people to take their lives; and

WHEREAS, that resolve has given birth to the Jason Foundation, Inc., which is dedicated to fighting teen suicides through parent seminars, teen seminars, direct personal contact with family members, community support groups for survivors of suicide victims, intervention, and working with school boards to implement awareness/prevention programs; and

WHEREAS, a key feature is a preventive program using education and peer support in a kit entitled "A Promise For Tomorrow". It is designed so that school and church teachers, or other youth workers can present the program which, is distributed at no cost upon request, in an effective and professional manner; and

WHEREAS, such an impassioned yet well organized and motivated grassroots effort which is designed to combat a major cause of the loss of our children and the resultant grief and shattered lives of survivors, is deserving of our gratitude, thanks and support; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we express our deep concern for the rising incidence of suicide among the youth of our state and nation, and express our heartfelt condolences to each family who has lost a member to such a tragedy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our profound admiration and appreciation to Mr. A. Clark Flatt and the officers and members of the Jason Foundation, Inc. for their imaginative and unstinting efforts to combat this scourge and to aid the surviving families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted.